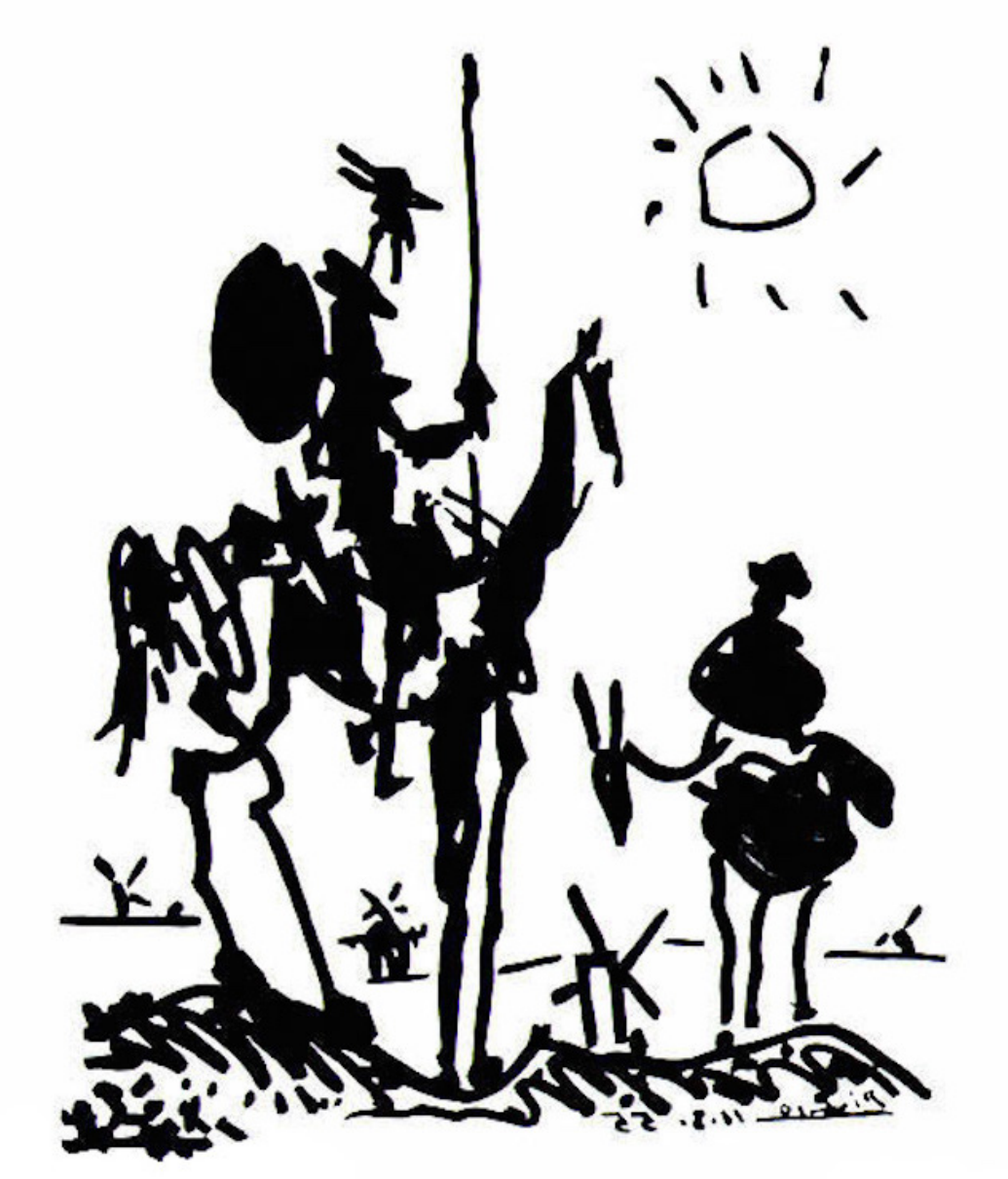
DITTIES FOR THE BLUEGRASS PYRE



MICHAEL J. HOLSHOUSER

Ditties for the Bluegrass Pyre
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Pronunciation: Holtzhowzer

All have the express written encouragement
To distribute this creation freely to any and all
Who have banjos a-strumming in their minds

Preface

An inspired couple nights' worth of blugrassy ditties that came out while wandering from group to group with Mikki Larrick at the 2018 California Bluegrass Association (CBA) Spring Campout at the Stanislaus County Fairgrounds in Turlock, California. Sent a copy to Mikki for use in her songwriting – she calls them hooks – as well as anyone else with whom she cared to share them. And now blogged and pdf-ed for anyone else who might happenstance upon them in the dreamtime ahead.

California Bluegrass Association
https://www.cbaweb.org

Facebook: California Bluegrass Association
https://www.facebook.com/californiabluegrass/

Ditties for the Bluegrass Pyre PDF
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Ditties for the Bluegrass Pyre

Michael J. Holshouser

CBA Spring Campout
Stanislaus County Fairgrounds
Turlock, California
April 2018

Sit back, good friends, hear some random thoughts,
And feel free to use 'em and/or abuse 'em as you like.

The players played afire into the wee-rising hours:
Fiddles 'n banjos 'n guitars 'n mandolins 'n basses 'n more.
And I listened as true and full as true as full in this graying mind allows.

Holding on to nothing sets me straight.

The light in the window is drawing me home.

Hadn't a clue till fate ran me into you.

Lord, don't take me yet, I ain't been paid.

How deep the song is the light of you.

With or without you, I am free, babe.

Life's a rabbit hole, done left me feeling mean.
Took me places I never, never should have seen.
Ain't no rewind button for the shoulda-coulda-woulda.

The rain, it washed me pure and clean.

The whim of fate is the hue of you.

I'm done, this body has tortured me long enough.

Blessed are the meek ain't my way.

The monster's in me, Momma, I'm sorry to say.

That girl, she done led me down a hard, hard trail.

The breeze, it felt so good across my suffering cheek.

This jingle’s for you, now get out of my way.

The moon, it woke me, and I was out the door.

What bluegrass done for me, well, it just ain’t right.

The coon was a-running till my dog’s first bite.

Had no clue till she disappeared into the night.

Good thing I didn’t come home, I’d have shot ‘em both.

Bought my girl a ring, and she pawned my soul.

In my eyes, the bluegrass gaze; in my mind, the bluegrass daze.

We danced round the fire till the sun’s first light.

The truth, it ain’t never what it seems.

Missed my calling till one night it found me sitting next to you.

I am the outlaw in my girl’s worst dreams.

Fingers and thumb strum the tune.

The tapping foot draws out the song.

The lies, the lies, will you ever stop spinning them my way?

The mountain trail takes me home.

Pushed her out the hayloft to set myself free.

Woke up to Jack Daniels still stinging my tongue, blurring my mind.

Friday night’s high turned into the Monday morning blues.

Willie Nelson left on the bus last night.

This drifter’s arms will set you free at the morning light.

My momma, she’s the first and last woman for me.

Don’t know why you said goodbye.

Sold my soul again last night.

It was with this song that I met the dawn.

I'm home again, woman, but not for long.

Stupid is stupid, oh say can't you see.

Girl, I thought you said you'd set me free.

The Rabbit Hole is spiraling me down, down, down again.

How true is true? How false is false? And what's the lie between?

Can't you see what you mean to me?

Would have told her if she'd let me stay.

Left the squalor of the city lights for the country bluegrass song.

This old snap-crackle-pop back, it sure ain't what it used to be.

My favorite old dog, he treed that coon.

The mystery born in you, was born in me, too.

That pearl necklace, it done broke my heart.

The root of life, it runs deep in me.

That rising moon made my dog and me howl for joy.

The preacher's daughter, what she done to me.

Excuse me, my banjo calls.

The drifter's song set me free.

Did I just hear another honey-tongue lie?

Won't you sing that pretty song out loud again.

The different you, the different me, I am you and you are me.

Cry, baby, cry, just don't say goodbye.

She came to me in a sky-blue cotton dress.

Tell me it ain't true, and I'll believe the lie.

That Jack burns my tongue just right tonight.

Damn you, Willie, play on, play on.

How sweet the sound, the stream in me.

The future of time is but a song in my mind.

She made me cry, so I stayed another day.

The last song let my dreams run free.

Jezebel, Jezebel, please, please, leave me alone.

The wandering caravan alit with bluegrass fire travels across the land.

How true the true, how false the false.

Sing that song again for me, my friend.

Higher highs, lower lows, you bring ‘em all home, girl.

Whoever said love is forever never met you.

Lead me on, pretty girl, and I will follow like the dog I am.

One, two, three, four, the tune carries the floor.

Reflections, what do they mean?

Every creek a Mississippi traveling to the sea.

Music, it sets me free.

The nomads of bluegrass ride again.

The limb broke, and I died.

Banjo or fiddle or guitar or mandolin, the big brown bass strums along.

That pony don’t care much for me.

The harmonic string finds its chord.

Malarkey met its definition in you.

It’s a cold world, Momma, and I am so alone.

Without you, what would I do?

Just another silly song while the river streams on.

Was it A? Was it D? Can't remember for the life of me.

Nurse that beer, smoke that song.

Best walk away, girl, don't ask why.

Country songs, they set me free.

The door opens, the door closes, be sure to watch your toes.

The demon in your eyes makes my blood run cold.

American Apple Pie, it's done lost its sheen.

Bliss, what was that again?

The glint of sunlight cast me over the rainbow.

Girl, who's that boy staring at you?

I sing this song because it came to me last night.

The devil's strumming left me cold.

Walking on water in my dreams.

Sorry, Dan, it ain't true.

That river, was it a trickle? Was it a flood? I cannot remember.

Dreams asunder pluck my strings.

That twang makes me feel good.

Drifting down the Tuolumne was my destiny.

That banjo, it be too heavy for me.

Honky-tonk girl, don't say goodbye to me.

Sorrow fills me like the wind does a tree.

Oh, Lord, the world took me away from you.

The peas, they are green; the corn, it is yellow.

The train, it choo-chooed on down the line.

The fiddle played extraordinaire through the dawn's early light.

That guitar, she taught me her tune.

Pawned my guitar for a ticket out of Memphis.

You say that you love me, but it sure ain't true.
Your kisses leave me colder than a morning dew.

Me and my dogs, we howled at the moon all night.

The sun, the moon, they don't care.

Your beauty, my beast, what a team we make.

The butler and the maid, they walked up the stairs.

Green eggs, green ham, cooked extra special fine.

The sorrow, it don't need more rain.

Heaven hath no fury like a born-again shrew scorned.

Thing One, Thing Two, what on earth did you do?

Hello, goodbye, what does that mean?

Them hunting dogs missed the coon sleeping in the log.

Oh, Gabriel, Gabriel, where hast thine horn gone?

Bit off more than I can chew, and the devil, he's collecting, with interest due.

Daddy told me, "Run, boy, run, hell hath no fury like your mother scorned."

Walking along the wave-battered shore left me feeling just right.

Tunes, more tunes, and even more tunes, set the night ablaze.

Pass the ham, and then the corn, and then the peas.

The peas, it was passed after the ham and corn.

The moon, it made me howl all night.

Keeping your nose on your own face looks best to me.

Midnight deflection is nothing more than a reflection in my mind.

Bluegrass heaven ain't for me.

This dog day dummy has his sights set on you.

Dreams follow me home, and you are their queen.

Perish the thought afore it perishes you.

The mountains beckon me home so far away.

How a butterfly set me free.

She left me down and out, and then I met you.

Sleeping alone, it ain't so bad next to you.

Country boy, take me home.

Country girl, take me home.

Say what you will, home, it be free.

How sweet the blues are to me.

Mountains of smoky blue strike my soul true.

The dream, as long as it is short.

Don't ask, don't tell, is the best policy for them who would be free.

That Kentucky moonshine left me feeling mean.

Letting stupid be stupid surely ain't ever the good Lord's way.

My girl slammed the door for good last night.

Drifting down the river set my soul free.

The smoky green burns well in my mind tonight.

She held me through the night till the morning light.

I'd have stayed if I'd known you loved me.

You came home before I could leave you.

Today's headlines are tomorrow's sorrows.

All your promises were the same lies you told her.

Loyal to all and none, I burned a trail home free.

When you said you loved me, I believed it all true,
But it was a from-the-get-go lie I finally saw through.

Promised you everything, and it was never enough.

Held you close, dear, as close as close allows,
And still you left me all alone, crying and sighing,
Before the morning sunlight through the window streamed.

Yet another face in which vanity will find harbor.

It weren't me, babe, it weren't me. I swear my lie through and through.

Left the city for a mountain, and this life, it weren't ever the same.

Sang it true till I met you.

Left you once, left you twice, third time's the charm, unless you call me back again.

Un-caged, flying free, remembering again how little I care.

Only you? I don't think so, kiddo. I'm a dog, a dog through and through.

Believed you when you said it was over, but then the door, it didn't slam.

You love me, I love you, let's say it again to prime it true.

Strumming them chords, he's a bluegrass player.

You knew I was gone before I left.

I knew you were gone before you left.

Ain't killed nobody today, but not for want of thinking about it.

The twang lingers in my mind, and on paper words flow, and then more again.

Another slice of dream tucks me in its seam.

The mystery of existence is short no matter how long, and long no matter how short.

The sneeze that brought the house down.

The wolf blew and blew and blew, and then, voilà, he was stew.

Went home, passed out, woke up next to you.

Never knew how good a good friend could be, till I became good friends with you.

If leaving was the plan, best it was your idea.

The joke, it wasn't funny to me, but I guffawed just the same.

If kisses were sand, we'd be lying on a beach.

Stopped coming by so long ago, when you made it clear I'd never be in your show.

Oh, you're still here? Why? No, don't answer that. Just let the door hit you at least once on the way out.

If you knew how to read my mind, you'd know I'd told you it was over oh so long ago.

Bet you wouldn't treat me this way if I was a rich movie star.

Immortal soul, mortal body, forever young playing the gray.

Bad news, good news, it don't ever feel the same.

Twang, twang, the fiddle sang, the guitar joined in, and then the mandolin.

Say what you will, loving you ain't no crime.

The morning light found me alone and free again.

Sift through the sand, and you'll find my mind.

Can't hear you, and not just because I don't want to.

Hesitate too long and I'll be gone.

They say the good die young, so at least I know I won't ever be as old as you.

Wherever I set this pillow is my home.

I sang your song, now you sing mine.

You'll find me at the end of the long and winding road, through two gates and a door.

The only thing that makes your being gone better is you thought it was your idea.

The ice cracked, and I died.

So long ago you were handsome and bold, but now you're just a couch potato leeching my soul.

The players came and went and found each other anew, happily strumming, happily singing, and the crossing moon never even once noticed.

Roses are red, violets are blue,
I'll sing a song if you sing one, too.

The happiest rose is the one you never picked.

You said you loved me, but it was just a ploy.
Now I'm forever ruined, and you think it funny.
I thought you'd be mine, I believed you'd be true.
Now you're just another scar in my bittersweet mind.
I won't miss the pain, darling, no, I won't miss the pain.

Dittyfest, dittyfest, higher and higher and higher upon the dittyfest pyre.

I loved you once, I loved you twice,
But you said with a kiss it would never be enough,
And left me for a cherry red pickup
And my former best friend.

Hadn't a clue till I met you.

The song ain't mine, the song ain't yours;
It belongs to anyone with an ear for verse.

Wandering here, wandering there, the tunes, the tunes, in every cranny, from every nook.

The difference between you and me is just a thought or two or three.

Alone in their own worlds, the players all play along.

Did I leave you? Did you leave me? Can't remember, but we're done-all-done just the same.

Hadn't heard that one before, but it sounded the same.

The morning lark strums the fiddle in my head.

Half-baked ain't bad at all.

A Christmas tree is dying to come home with you.

How sad the song that says you left me.

He was a lamb when his wolf weren't calling.

A tear came, and I was lost again.

The dog howled, the cat yowled,
And the band played on and on and on,
Until well past the break of dawn.

I left you, you left me, till we came together again under the old oak tree.

Drifting along, my heart has lost its song.

Forgive me, darling, and I'll be happy again.

"Awesome!" was the last thing she said.

Lawman, lawman, lock me up or get me home, I'll be drunk just the same.

So far away, so long ago, the show, the show, it changes so.

I said, "Stop, let me be."
You said, "But I love you!"
And I cried out, "I just want to be free."

Notes for you, a community true.

Did I fall in love? Did I fall in lust? The difference ain't that much.

I thought I left you behind, but you followed me home anyway.

The highway ain't no Yellow Brick Road,
But it be Oz in the mind a-trucking along.

Heard the call, and ignored it, as I so often manage to do.

You stole my heart, you stole my mind, your kisses, they left me blind.

I said, "Stop, please stop, don't go, I love you."
But you slammed the door, drove off with a roar, and I was all alone again.
Grabbed a beer, some chips, turned on the television,
And waited for Kate to stop by.
Mix it up; it ain't nobody's song.

Lord, don't take me yet, I ain't been laid.

Guess I'll just stay the same man you left. It'll probably keep working.

Pieces fall, pieces scatter; rest assured I'm still yours through it all.

Nowhere to go, nothing to be, and no plans to change.
Only birds and fishes and spiders are freer than I.

That weren't the plan in my head, so I'm moving on. Please resist the urge to follow.

Here tonight, gone tomorrow, enjoy me now in your candlelit nest,
For I'll be gone before the sun peeks through the garden window.

And then I saw her ring.

I left you, darling, so you'd be free.

Time weaves along in me, along in you,
So we sing the song, and believe it true.

This little old heart hadn't never felt love till I saw your sweet face.

You locked me out like the dog I am.

Told her I'd love her forever, and then never saw her again to prove it.

Drifters drift on, nice guys hang around.

Who wins, who loses, just a state of mind.

Hang tough, little dogie.

The dog sniffed here, the dog sniffed there.
The coon slipped away, and lived another day.

Sitting here a-listening, it's all music to me.
The gift of time ain't mine to give,
But for the attention, the reflection,
I lend your strumming rhyme.

Afterward

Greetings,

Writing has been an enjoyable process ever since I first began toying with prose; scribbling poetry, keeping journals, corresponding with friends and acquaintances during the college daze. The philosophical/mystical/whatever-you-want-to-call-them thoughts, that have been popping into mind since 1989, have always been very out-of-the-blue spontaneous. Nothing planned or forced about them. They are being shared on the off chance that others may find them of interest, though, quite frankly, it really does not matter if no one else ever even reads them, for I am, first and foremost, my own audience. I got mine, so to speak. I played my little part. I had my share of fun. And it is, as it has ever been, up to each to discern their own, on their own.

There are really no followers in this Don Quixote quest; only earnest seekers, who waylay their desires and fears and dreads, enough to discern that which is the end to doubt, the end to dueling with windmills. “Yay” if it is your fate to figure it out. “Oh well” if it is not. And “so it goes” either way, really. Ecclesiastes 1:2 is always a good reminder: “Vanity of vanities,” saith the Preacher, “Vanity of vanities. All is vanity.” Awareness can only, with great effort, regain control, regain sovereignty, from the usurper, imagination, creator of all that is time, creator of all that is space. Creator of all that is illusion, has never thestillnessbeforetimebeen anything more than illusion, will never be anything more than illusion. Only as real as the given moment.

“The Stillness Before Time” is the original work that came together in 1992, including mostly aphorisms, an essay, a newspaper question-and-answer, ten reflections, and lists of both movies and books. Though an early self-published version, long since edited and expanded, can be purchased at major booksellers, a downloadable copy is available, no charge, at the link below. There are also links to a variety of blogs of other creations by me, along with links to many writings of a similar nature, by thinkers and seers from across all times, across all geographies. "The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim" is the second published book, and is both blogged and available as a PDF download.

The “Breadcrumbs” titles, published annually since 2015, all include the core chapters: Leftovers, Soundbites, Breadcrumbs. In the Breadcrumbs chapters, I unleash thoughts of a more personal nature than in the other two. All just to show I was ensconced in a living, breathing, relativity mundane, oftentimes foolish, mortal mind-body. An actor playing the hand that was dealt; same as everyone else, vain as everyone else. No need to sculpt me into more than I was. No need for myths, nor legends, nor fables, nor miracles, nor cult followings, nor any other fictions, any other absurdities, over to which the human mind, and all its imaginary history, has so often given itself. The Breadcrumbs chapters prove me again and again to be yet another Shakespearian player, as full of the limited and arbitrary as anyone else born into this dream of space and time. So please be sure not to shape me, or these many random thoughts, into some dogmatic absurdity. Use them as a launchpad, not an orbit.

“The Return to Wonder” blog is a compendium of aphorisms not included in the three other works: The Stillness Before Time, The Ponderings of Yaj Ekim, and Breadcrumbs. It originally totaled 3,000 pages formatted in 300 ten-page chapters written since 1990-ish. A gradual editing that will likely never be completed, is changing that dynamic into something of a mishmash.

Please note that this sort of wordplay is very haphazard, way too much work to put into any order. Probably best read it in bits and pieces in the here and there. One of those open-to-any-page works. Especially well-suited for coffee shops, coffee tables, and porcelain thrones.

Also note that all writings are always subject to updates and editing, so if you are interested in the most current version – before this house of cards comes tumbling down, and the world grows large again – downloading PDF copies every once and a while might be a reasonable discipline. This applies especially to the current year of Breadcrumbs, which could well be an annual project until the last wheezing breath, though frankly, the temptation to stop writing entirely is not off the table. It is a pleasant way to pass some of the countdown remaining, but it is unlikely there is much ground that has not been wandered by this frame of reference far more than enough already. No matter how many times Sisyphus rolls the boulder up the mountain, it is more than a little doubtful that the blind men and their true-believer followers, will ever discern, ever realize, ever embrace, the elephant in the middle of the room, without fabricating some new form of absurdity. It is the way we roll, it is the way we have always rolled, it is the way we will, far more than probably, always roll. Every species has its limitations, and we have in this mind's eye, far-exceeded ours.

That said, if you do find these many thoughts at all worth preserving, for whatever times are ahead for this world and all its life forms, please feel free to share them with others who might also appreciate them. Else they may well swiftly slip back into the timeless oblivion from whence they came.

So it goes, either way. I played my part, I said my piece, I had my fun.

All the best,

M

P.S. For best viewing online, using the largest screen you have available to explore my little theme park, is suggested. Scrolling down and down on a phone screen is just not going to give you the same entrée.

P.P.S. Regarding the name Yaj Ekim ... It is just a reverse spelling of the first and middle names ... Michael Jay Holshouser ... Mike Jay ... Yaj Ekim.

P.P.P.S. Coincidently, make of it whatever you will, or will not, Yaj is an Indian boy's name meaning worshipper, sacrifice, another name for Shiva, a sage. And Ekim is a Turkish name for October meaning "sowing" (of seeds). All kinds of absurdity can be read into that by the many so-inclined – none of which was in mind when I came up with the idea to reverse the letters to my name. See P.P.S. for details.

P.P.P.P.S. Yes, I am Shiva. And so are You. No, I am not Shiva. And neither are you. Irony and paradox rule.

The Stillness Before Time
Reflections From a Fellow Sojourner

There is really only one Way.
It is without division or boundary.
It is without name or theology.
Awareness is its scripture.
Here now, its venue.
You, its witness.
Your life, the journey.

Website
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com

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https://thestillnessbeforetime.blogspot.com

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https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/thestillnessbeforetime.pdf

The Original Works

The Stillness Before Time,
Reflections From a Fellow Sojourner
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Ten Reflections

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Breadcrumbs 2023 & Beyond
Bits and Pieces From a Dream of Time
https://breadcrumbs2023.blogspot.com
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The Return to Wonder
Field Notes from the Unknown
(Major edit underway – New copy colored blue and green)
https://thereturntowonder.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/thereturntowonder.pdf

The Derivative Collection

Aftershocks Autumn 2024
https://aftershocksautumn2024.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/aftershocks2024.pdf

Frames of Reference
Peering Through the Windows of Perception
https://framesofreferenceperception.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/framesofreference.pdf

Imagination: The Great Usurper
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Jesus on Prophets
What Any Seer Likely Faces Returning to the Cave of Origin
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Lost in Translation
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Michael's Rabbit Hole
A Selection of Breadcrumbs & Other Aphorisms
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Of Meaning & Purpose
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Standouts From the Return to Wonder Edit
Selections From the First Sixteen Chapters
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The Call of the Eternal
A Conversation With My Self
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The Gordian Knot of Ethical Thinking
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The 'And More' Collection

Doubt, Doubt & More Doubt
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Grubs, Grubs & More Grubs
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Titles, Titles & More Titles
https://evenmoretitles.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/titlestitlesandmoretitles.pdf

Even More Titles, Titles & More Titles
https://theevenmoreseries.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/theevenmoreseries.pdf

The Singles Collection

59 Moments to The Way It Is (And Is Not)
https://59momentstothewayitisandisnot.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/59momentstothewayitisandisnot.pdf

Of the Human Journey
Along with 'Got God?' and 'Ten Reflections'
https://ofthehumanjourney.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/ofthehumanjourney.pdf

The Mystery of the Mystery
https://themysteryofthemysteryseries.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/themysteryofthemysteryseries.pdf

The Real is Discovering
https://therealisdiscoveringseries.blogspot.com
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To Be, or Not to Be
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Who Was the First?
https://thewhowasthefirstseries.blogspot.com
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The Sidebar Collection

A Short List of Books for the Up and Coming
Some Written Works That May Help Get the Young Up to Speed
https://listofbooksfortheupandcoming.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/ashortlistofbooksfortheupandcoming.pdf

Breadcrumbs: The Original Blog
https://michaelsbreadcrumbs.blogspot.com/2015/01/under-construction_28.html

Conversations
A Variety of Letters, Emails, Texts, & Sundry Odds 'n Ends
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https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/conversations.pdf

Definitions
An Incomplete Selection of Contemplative Definitions
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https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/definitions.pdf

Ditties for the Bluegrass Pyre
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Jester Amok
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Once Upon a Christmas
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Possible Last Words & Epitaphs
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Sketches of the Once Upon a Time
A Few Epiphanies and Other Hallmark Moments
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https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/sketchesoftheonceuponatime.pdf

Spam Responses (a.k.a., WTF Is This Shit!?)
https://spamresponsesakawtfisthisshit.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/spamresponsesakawtfisthisshit.pdf

The Corollaries of Yaj Ekim
https://corollariesyajekim.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/thecorollariesofyajekim.pdf

The Standard Ripostes
The Scribe's Go-to Responses to This and That in the Day-To-Day
https://thestandardripostes.blogspot.com
https://thestillnessbeforetime.com/thestandardripostes.pdf

Uncle Sam Says
https://whatunclesamsays.blogspot.com
https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1311088415085&type=3

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